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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

SEPTEMBER, 1852.

PROGRESS IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE.

There is now, as there has been for the last quarter of a century, a steady advance in the cause of Peace ; but, like the most important changes both in nature and in society, we can neither measure nor observe its progress from day to day. We lack the requisite optics and criteria. Neither the growth of vegetation which produces the verdure of Spring, and the golden harvests of Autumn, nor the planetary movements by which day succeeds night, and one season follows another in their appointed order, can be noted at the time by the keenest vision of man ; but, by taking proper intervals for observation, we infer these changes with so much confidence as almost to imagine we actually see their progress.

So with all the great changes in society. Public opinion, general usages, the grand characteristics of a people or an age, are not the frost-work of an hour, or the mushroom of a night, but the joint effect of various causes, imperceptibly yet surely conspiring to produce such results. The ultimate effect is obvious to every one ; but no eye is keen enough to mark each step of the progress by which it is reached. We must have an interval of years, if not of a whole age or more, to note and measure in full the changes that are confessedly going on in society through the world.

Still more true is this of the changes which the progress of Peace is effecting in the great commonwealth of nations. These changes are necessarily so gradual as to be distinctly perceptible only after a considerable lapse of time. Such vast masses of mind do not change their habits of thought, feeling and action in an hour ; nor is the change generally acknowledged till long after it has actually been made. It is not so much seen as inferred ; a process of reasoning rather than mere perception. After intervals sufficiently long, and from favorable points of observation, we must collect the data from which every one will see and acknowledge the progress this cause has really made since its origin, some thirty-seven years ago.

In the course of events, however, we observe incidental indications of progress in this cause, which few will be able or disposed to gainsay. Such are the developments in the recent difficulties between us and England about

the fisheries. When a similar misunderstanding arose some twelve years ago about our north-eastern boundary, a very serious alarm spread among men whose business was connected with the ocean, and prevailed to such an extent, that some individuals lost scores of thousands of dollars from the mere apprehension of war; but so altered is now the general tone, and so decided is public opinion understood to be in both countries against a resort to the sword for the settlement of the points in controversy, that business has swerved, in consequence of these difficulties, scarcely a hair's breadth from its wonted course. Politicians, perhaps for base, party purposes, have talked loud about the matter; but not the slightest panic has reached the insurance office or the counting-room. Fifty or even thirty years ago, war might have been apprehended as very likely to result from such a misunderstanding; and the fact that such an event now excites scarce a ripple on the surface of the world's commerce and intercourse, shows somewhat strikingly how different such questions have come to be treated from what they once were, and how great and auspicious a change has already been effected on the subject of international Peace.

We might quote half a dozen similar cases within the last ten years; but this single one may suffice to put the reader upon a train of reflection which will convince him that the cause of Peace, though necessarily slow in its progress, and imperceptible at the time in the decisive changes it is effecting in the international habits of Christendom, is still moving onward with a sure and steady step to a glorious triumph in due time. We need patience; but if we hold on and hold out, to the end in using aright the means of God's appointment for the result we seek, it will, in his own good time, come with absolute certainty. Nor does He even now withhold providential indications amply sufficient to encourage our utmost efforts; for the events of the last twenty, or even ten years, prove this cause to have made far greater progress than its most sanguine friends could have expected so soon from the small amount of efforts hitherto made.

EX-SENATOR BENTON ON PEACE.

This veteran statesman, long a favorite and champion of the democratic party, we are glad to find, in a speech recently addressed to his constituents on the occasion of his re-election to Congress, giving utterance, in the extracts which follow, to views far in advance of what we have been wont to hear from politicians:

I shall be in favor of peace, friendship and commerce with all nations, and war with none, except for great national causes; and that after exhausting all resources of honorable adjustment. The last argument of kings—the *ultima ratio regum*, so proudly inscribed on his cannon by Louis the Fourteenth—is not to be, with me, the first argument of the Republic! especially in this age of advanced civilization and social international communication, and when reason and justice, not force and arms, should settle, as far as possible, the controversies of nations as well as individuals.